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Social Work Office of Research & Public Service
(SWORPS)

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UT College of Social Work

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Fall/Winter
2008

stimulus

The Alumni Newsletter for the University of Tennessee College of Social Work

The background of the cover features a vibrant, high-angle view of the Nashville, Tennessee skyline. The city is nestled on a river, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. In the foreground, the silhouettes of five graduates wearing black mortarboards are visible, looking out over the city. The sky is a mix of blue and white clouds.

UT College of Social Work: Creating Capital for Our Communities

in this issue:

- The College of Social Work Featured in the University-wide Capital Campaign Kick-Off
- Charles Glisson Awarded \$1.5 million Grant
- David Patterson Uses Cutting-Edge Technology to Help End Chronic Homelessness
- Akins Endowed Scholarship Will Provide Awards to Outstanding MSSW Graduate Students



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elcome to the fall issue of *Stimulus!*

This fall we welcome two new faculty at our Nashville campus and highlight some of our outstanding alums and supporters. Our capital campaign kick-off has been very successful as we reach the half-way point in our fundraising efforts. We invite you to join your fellow alums with a donation to the college to help keep our programs strong and the college moving up in the rankings. Congratulations are due to all of you! The strength of our college relies on the quality of our students, the outstanding teaching and research of our faculty, and the leadership of our alumni and donors. Thanks to all of you who have stepped up to help us in the capital campaign!

This issue also highlights a new grant received by Dr. Charles Glisson, director of the college's Children's Mental Health Services Research Center. Funded by the W.T. Grant Foundation, this grant solidifies our growing partnership with Helen Ross McNabb Center. In partnership, we will be researching the facilitating conditions for moving evidence-based practices into real world settings. The findings from this grant will provide critical infor-

mation for service delivery providers throughout the country struggling with the implementation of evidence-based practices.

Our new evidence-based curriculum is in place and our first graduates of this curriculum will graduate in May 2009. The faculty have devoted much time and study to the development and implementation of this competency-based curriculum. As we continue with the curriculum we are mounting an outcome assessment of its effectiveness and will be sharing this information with you in the future.

It is a privilege to work with such dedicated faculty, bright and enthusiastic students, and strong supporters of the college. The future remains bright for the college as we move forward in important ways, not only by remaining relevant to practice concerns but also in creating new knowledge to lead us into the future.

Thanks for all you do to support the college!

Helen M. Downes

College Announces Akins Family Fellowship

by Betsy DeGeorge

The College of Social Work is pleased to announce the establishment of the Akins Family Fellowship. This contribution to the school creates an endowed scholarship that will, when fully funded, provide scholarships to MSSW graduate students.

Stipulations of this fellowship emphasize volunteerism, requiring scholarship recipients to participate as community volunteers during the period of the award and encouraging continuing volunteer activity after graduation. Emphasis on the volunteer spirit is in keeping with the character of the Akins family. Darrell Akins, a graduate of the University of Tennessee and Chairman/Partner of AkinsCrisp Public Strategies, is a native of East Tennessee who has served the community in numerous civic capacities. In the corporate world, Akins practices a kind of corporate citizenship that embraces giving back to the community.

The College of Social Work has been the beneficiary of Akins' volunteer energies for some time. He has served as a member of the board of visitors and is a member of the capital campaign committee. Rachel Akins, daughter of Darrell and Deborah Akins, is a 2005 graduate of the CSW master's program with a concentration in management and community practice. She is presently the Director of Development for Samaritan Inns, an agency combating homelessness and addictions, located in Washington, D.C.

"When my wife and daughter and I became aware of the UT capital campaign, we wondered what would be appropriate for us to do," states Akins. "We concluded that founding this fellowship would be a way to say thank you to the College of Social Work for the great preparation that Rachel has received while pursuing her career in social work.

We also wanted to do something to recognize the excellence of leadership that Karen Sowers has provided as Dean and the great progress the college has made under her leadership."

Beginning in the year 2012, student scholarships will begin to be awarded. Scholarship applicant eligibility will be extended to enrolled or admitted individuals in the Master of Science in Social Work program at the Knoxville campus. Applicants must be pursuing a degree with a focus on evidence-based practice across systems. Applicants must also have graduated from an East Tennessee high school. This is the second UT fellowship that has been initiated by the Akins family; the first was established in honor of Akins' parents and supports students following a career in guidance counseling.

"We are indebted," states Dean Sowers, "to the Akins family for the establishment of this fellowship. Tuition continues to rise and public funding continues to decrease. The establishment of this fellowship will ensure the support of a social work student in perpetuity, which means that the Akins family can be assured that their generous donation will be a legacy in the college. I am pleased to know that the Akins family will forever be a part of the College of Social Work."

—Betsy DeGeorge is the
Publications Manager for SWORPS



Senator Douglas Henry Recognized for Inspiring Service to Children and Families at Risk

Senator Douglas Henry, known as the "patron saint of children and social workers" for his long and dedicated service to the children and families of Tennessee, received The University of Tennessee College of Social Work's Senator Douglas Henry Award for Service to Children and Families at Risk in recognition of his inspiring example. Senator Henry was the first recipient of the award, presented by Dean Karen Sowers at a gathering of alumni and friends at the home of Lisa Pote in Nashville last May.



"The award is intended to recognize individuals or organizations with an exemplary record of service to children and families," Dean Sowers said.

"Whether you call him the 'patron saint of children and social workers' or just a legislator who 'hired out for this job' of serving all Tennesseans with integrity and compassion, Senator Henry is a living example of how a public servant can make a huge difference for good."

During his years in the state legislature, Senator Henry has sponsored numerous bills that affect the safety and well-being of the state's most vulnerable citizens. These include legislation to prohibit the placement of children in adult jails and to provide state supplemental funding to improve Juvenile Court services, as well as many bills aimed at improving the adoption system.

Senator Henry has also sponsored bills recognizing the importance of social workers; raising the educational standards, credentialing requirements, and salaries of Tennessee Department of Children's Services caseworkers; and allowing social workers to receive reimbursement from insurance companies for mental health services.

In receiving the award, the Senator acknowledged the support of his family, especially his wife, Lolly. He said that over the course of his 40 years of service to the people of Tennessee, he has become convinced that social work is the most important profession.

Dean Sowers said the award will be presented annually to a person or agency which exemplifies the values and dedication of Senator Henry.

—Stephanie Piper

UT College of Social Work: Creating Capital for the Future

by Kirche Rogers

Through the support of many people across the state and nation, the College of Social Work has been able to develop high-quality programs and research that provide students a world-class education. Graduates of the programs attribute much of their success in the field to the outstanding education they received from the college. From cutting-edge research projects to recognition by the U.S. News and World Report's national rankings of graduate programs as being 26th overall, the College of Social Work is equipped to give faculty and graduates the tools they need to provide top quality services to those in need in communities both near and far.

College of Social Work Students and Faculty Are Well-Poised to Help Communities in Need

Three CSW Programs Command Center Stage at the U.T. Capital Campaign Kick-Off

The Campaign for Tennessee, a university system-wide fundraising capital campaign, was officially launched on April 17, 2008, with a multi-media extravaganza and dinner at UT's Thompson Boling Arena in Knoxville. The event highlighted statewide accomplishments of the University of

Tennessee, and three of the college's programs were featured on stages set up around the arena floor. A speaker noted the significance of each program as a spotlight shone on each stage.

The college was well-represented among the one thousand guests who attended the event. Dr. Elizabeth Strand and Dr. John New represented Veterinary Social Work, along with graduate student Tiffany Pennington and Administrative Assistant Karla Edwards of the College of Social Work. Two four-legged friends appeared with the group—"Maggie," a golden retriever and HABIT (Human Animal Bond in Tennessee) volunteer, and Dean Sowers' beloved "Hayley."

The college's Children's Mental Health Services Research Center was represented by Center Founder and Director Dr. Charles Glisson; Associate Director Denny Dukes; lecturer Kimberly Cassie, and doctoral student Young Sook Kim.

The college's undergraduate research



Dean Sowers chats with (middle) Caula Beyl, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and Way Kuo, former dean of the College of Engineering, at UT's Capital Campaign Kick-off event.

program was also featured. Dr. Matthew Theriot, program director; Dr. Sarah Craun, coordinator of senior research projects; Heather Marshall, College of Social Work alumna and research project award winner; and students Yarielis Torres and Gary Singleton appeared on stage to represent this program.

The Campaign for Tennessee has an overall goal of \$1 billion by 2011. The College of Social Work's goal is \$5 million, and the current total raised is \$2,962,229.

—Kirche Rogers

Finding Innovative Ways to Help the Homeless

Dr. David Patterson, professor and director of the Knoxville Homeless Management Information System (KnoxHMIS), is working hard to promote the use of technology to help end chronic homelessness within the city of

Knoxville and Knox County. The Knoxville Homeless Management Information System was recently awarded a \$100,000 KnoxHMIS Implementation Grant from the East Tennessee Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to further KnoxHMIS' efforts toward coordination and management of information on the homeless population within the Knoxville area, in order to better serve the community.

The HMIS system is a technologically advanced database that gathers information on the

delivery of services to the homeless population within Knox County. It was designed to maximize service coordination for homeless individuals, provide aggregate data on the population, and to assess needs, service effectiveness, and accountability. The system was built to become an integral tool of practice, an instrument to strengthen communication and the business practices of the 12-provider/partner agencies that use it.

"We want case managers, social workers, and other frontline staff to use the HMIS as their primary information resource, as a means to reduce duplication of effort, services, and resources," said Dr. Patterson.



David Patterson

"This is a tremendous opportunity for agencies and partners to share information, to record the services they provide, to document agency and community efforts, and, in turn, help this area to reach the goals of the 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness."

While the battle to end chronic homelessness is a difficult battle to fight, the KnoxHMIS provides a critical tool of practice in this endeavor. Dr. Patterson and the KnoxHMIS team are currently working closely with community partners. "Our ultimate goal is to move our citizens into housing and to use KnoxHMIS data to coordinate housing and essential care," he said.

KnoxHMIS is a community outreach and research enterprise that is part of The University of Tennessee's Outreach Mission to partner with organizations of the community. This year the grant will be used to increase the staffing efforts of the KnoxHMIS team in order to increase contact with and assistance to partners and providers in their efforts to serve this Tennessee community.

—Vicky Bridgeforth,
Production Coordinator for SWORPS

Making Strides in Youth Service Delivery Programs

Dr. Charles Glisson, distinguished research professor and founding director of the college's Children's Mental Health Services Research Center (the CMH-SRC), has been awarded a three-year, \$1.5 million grant from the William T. Grant Foundation. Glisson and his colleagues will study the effectiveness of an organizational intervention developed by the CMHSRC to improve the work environments of mental health service programs and the outcomes for



Charles Glisson

continued on page 5



continued from page 4

the youth they serve. The foundation selected the CMHSRC's proposal for funding from a very competitive pool of top colleges.

The study will be conducted in partnership with the Knoxville-based Helen Ross McNabb Center, Tennessee's oldest and one of its largest mental health centers.

Glisson and colleagues will implement the study in 28 McNabb Center programs that serve a wide range of youth with various types of mental health related issues.

Fourteen of the programs will be randomly assigned to receive the CMHSRC's organizational intervention, called ARC (for Availability, Responsiveness and Continuity). Data will then be collected from all the programs to determine any effects of ARC.

According to the McNabb Center's Vice President for Operations Jerry Vagnier, the McNabb Center approached the CMHSRC for two primary reasons: to build a research-driven relationship with an academic institution and to learn from the college best practices in the social work field. "The Children's Mental Health Services Research Center has an excellent reputation, and we have had a relationship with the college already through student internships and other programs," he stated. "That made the contact with the university an easy process."

The ARC intervention stems from Glisson's nationally known research on organizational climate and culture in human services agencies. Among other findings, Glisson has shown that

- organizations establish a culture and climate for services,
- the organizational cultures and climates directly impact staff morale, turnover, service quality, and outcomes, and

- the organizational culture and climate can be changed with planned organizational intervention strategies.

The ARC organizational change model relies heavily on the involvement of frontline staff. The model teaches them how to use data, work as teams, problem solve, and deal

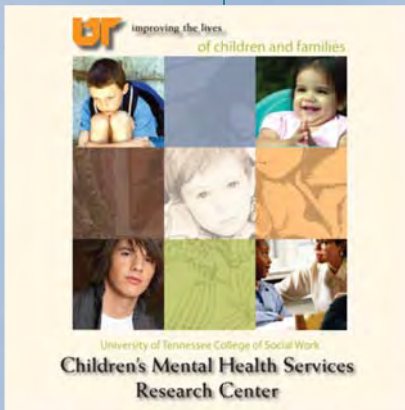
with issues that prevent positive service outcomes. An organization's leadership and middle managers also play key roles.

Glisson sees this new study as a real opportunity for both organizations.

"We are excited about this service-research partnership between the McNabb Center and the CMHSRC. We see this as a win-win as we advance this important area of research and also learn from each other." Vagnier adds, "We hope to demonstrate that, because of ARC, client outcomes will be improved. We want to get this to the population as quickly as possible."

Dean Sowers believes that the grant provides an excellent opportunity to help the community through research. She states, "For years there has been a gap between research findings and practice implementation. This grant will allow us to study the facilitating conditions and obstacles to implementing evidence-based practices into real world settings. A true partnership between the service delivery community and academia, this work will provide important findings for social service providers and will enhance the quality of service delivery outcomes. I congratulate both Charles Glisson and Andy Black (President and CEO of the Helen Ross McNabb Center) on receipt of this highly competitive grant, and I eagerly look forward to our ongoing collaboration with Helen Ross McNabb Center."

—Kirche Rogers



Media Enhanced Feature

Helping Communities Thrive: SWORPS Releases Demographic Profiles of the Greater Knoxville Area

For over 30 years, the college's Social Work Office of Research and Public Service has played a key role in working with organizations that provide services to families and children in the state of Tennessee. As families deal with a changing economy and fewer resources to provide for themselves, health and human service agencies have the challenge of working with more clients and aligning their services to meet families' immediate needs.

SWORPS is able to help agencies overcome their challenges through projects such as creating a "statistical snapshot" of the Knoxville area for the United Way of Greater Knoxville. This compilation of data, presented in a demographic profile Viewbook and in a series of articles published by the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, provides agencies with information on residents of the county that they serve.

The project involved a team of SWORPS's research and editorial staff including Cathy Irwin, Kay Ricci, Debbie Spelce, and Karen Homer (research); and Betsy DeGeorge, Margot Kline, and Kirche Rogers (editorial). Bingham Pope, assistant director in the SWORPS research and evaluation unit, spearheaded the project. "This presentation of 2006 demographic data is part of a community needs assessment that is sponsored by United Way of Greater Knoxville and is used by a lot of local organizations," she noted. It is an update of data reported in a 2004 study of the local nine county region, commissioned by the Nine Counties. One Vision Task Force. The information contained in that report continues to influence services provided by agencies and needed changes in the health and human services system.

The United Way of Greater Knoxville felt that changing local, regional, and national trends called for an update of the study that would serve the Knoxville community. The results of the updated study were compiled

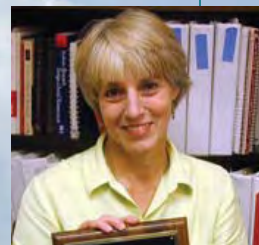
in a new Viewbook that places the emerging trends and gaps in service within the context of changes that are occurring in the state and nation. "The Viewbook can easily be interpreted by social service providers, community action agencies, the United Way, and the general public," stated Pope. Donna Deichert, vice president of community impact for the United Way of Greater Knoxville, noted, "The study provides an overall perspective of the community and larger issues in the area." Deichert also explained that the results are used by United Way in their planning and research and development work and to help align health and human services work with the issues and trends reported in the study.

The United Way's partner agencies, a diverse group of health and human service providers, use the information in the process of applying for grants and to research issues particular to their clients' needs.

Among the study's findings, data revealed that Knoxville's median income has become stagnant and, as a result, recent years' earnings growth had merely kept pace with inflation. The study also found that Tennessee has one of the fastest-growing Hispanic or Latino populations in the nation, right behind Arkansas, North Carolina and Georgia; there is a lack of health insurance in the region; and the number of "working poor" families is on the rise. "Social service providers are serving more clients as a result of these trends—and some people who have never before used their services," explained Pope.

To access the Viewbook and *Knoxville News-Sentinel* articles, please visit <http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus/>

—Kirche Rogers
is the Editor of Stimulus



Bingham Pope

College Honors Alumna Louise Brooks Katzman



Members of Louise Katzman's family celebrate with her. Shown are (l to r) Kathy and Brooks Katzman, Louise Brooks Katzman, and Terry Katzman-Rosenblum and Bernie Rosenblum.

The College of Social Work honored one of its first students at a reception held in Nashville last April.

Louise Brooks Katzman, a member of the original class of the School of Social Work which opened in Nashville in 1942, received the Alumni Award of Achievement from the University of Tennessee.

Alumni, faculty, students, and friends of the Nashville campus gathered at the Brentwood home of alumna Cindi Dingler to recognize Louise for her many accomplishments and her dedicated service to the Nashville community.

Louise received her undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt and spent a year at the School of Social Work before going on to complete her MSW at Washington University in St. Louis. Her interest in social work began in college when she heard Eleanor Roosevelt give a lecture about this new field. "I went back to my dormitory and told all my friends I was going to become a social worker," she recalls.

It was a prophecy that she more than

fulfilled. Louise was a professional social worker for 10 years, serving in the Tennessee Department of Public Welfare (now the Department of Human Services), with the American Red Cross, Jewish Family Service, and as Acting Director of the Children's Bureau.

She later devoted her time and considerable talents to volunteer activities and is credited with the existence of at least eight social service agencies in the Nashville area that she either founded or kept from closing. These include Hickory Hall School for Emotionally Disturbed Children, Residence for Young Women, Sunshine House for Alcoholic Women, Park Center, House of Friendship, Nashville Child Center, Opportunities Industrialization Center, and Jewish Family Service.

Over the course of her distinguished career of volunteer and professional service, Louise has received many awards. She won the Clara Barton Award from the American Red Cross, the YWCA Woman of Achievement Award, the Opportunities Industrialization Appreciation Award for Outstanding Board President, and the

Chesed Award for Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Family Service, among others.

In addition to her many volunteer commitments, Louise was a partner with fellow College of Social Work alumna Betty Werthan in the Katzman/Werthan Sculpture Gallery.

Dean Karen Sowers presented the Alumni Award of Achievement to Louise. She noted that when the School of Social Work opened its doors in 1942, there were 40 students. Tuition was \$80 per quarter. The school's first director, Lora Lee Pedersen, paid tribute to the first class and called them, "Those hardy pioneers who in a sense swung out into space as they risked their lot with a new school whose course was uncharted and unknown...."

"Louise Katzman was one of those pioneers," Dean Sowers said. "In her long career as a social worker and tireless volunteer in Nashville, she has truly opened new frontiers in caring for and supporting our most vulnerable citizens."

Now 94, Louise remains active. She spends time with her children, Terry Katzman-Rosenblum, Cindy Katzman, and Brooks Katzman, all of whom live in Nashville. She plays tennis several times a week and remains a valuable resource for Opportunities Industrialization Center, Park Center, and many of the other agencies she served. She has generously agreed to visit the Nashville campus this fall and speak to graduate students and faculty about her experiences in social work.

In closing, Dean Sowers told Louise, "We realize that you have several almas maters, but tonight the University of Tennessee wants to honor you for your truly inspiring example of service."

—Stephanie Piper

Don't Forget the Date!

This year's Homecoming Gala is fast approaching!

The event, which includes dinner, dancing, and a silent auction, takes place this year on November 7, at

Rothchild Catering and Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Gala tickets are \$30 and can be purchased until October 31. For more information, contact Karla Edwards at 865-974-3176 or email galainfo@utk.edu



Media Enhanced Feature

CSW's Cutting-Edge Distance Learning Program Offers Online Access

Distance education seems like a cutting-edge idea, and, certainly, internet-based technologies have changed the face of distance education during the last dozen years. However, the University of London offered the first distance education courses more than 150 years ago. They offered high-quality education to students anywhere and with a flexibility that allowed working people to advance through a recognized course of study. Charles Dickens wrote an article in sup-

brochure, "has the need for professionally prepared social workers been greater than now." Beginning in June of 2008, a cohort of students began a new kind of educational journey.

From across the state of Tennessee and using the online tools of the 21st century, a group of 14 Advanced Standing students began work on a distance education Master of Science in Social Work degree that meets the same standards as the traditional on-campus degree and that is fully accredited by the

Council on Social Work Education.

Distance education classes are taught primarily online. Several delivery methods are being used to implement this statewide education program. Some are synchronous (taking place at the same time), and some are asynchronous (available at any time). The synchronous sessions are mediated using UT's Centra LiveOnline classroom and allow groups of students from across the state to meet together online and interact using computer cameras and microphones. Asynchronous sessions allow for maximum flexibility of student schedules.

Students log into class sessions and materials at any time and access course materials according to their own individual schedules. Occasionally students get together at a central location for face-to-face sessions. Such meetings occur only a few times per semester and take place on Saturdays.

Kate McClernon-Chaffin, CMSW, is the distance education coordinator for the UT College of Social Work. Her vision for the program is in concert

with the goals of the college in general. She states, "It is the goal of the University of Tennessee College of Social Work to provide a quality education to eligible students across the state. By making the MSSW degree accessible to all potential students regardless of location, life circumstances, or job requirements, we are fulfilling this mission. We are hopeful that this will have a positive impact on the state of Tennessee in terms of providing well-trained social workers to every part of the state, including rural areas, which are extremely under represented. This, too, falls in line with the college's mission of providing service to vulnerable populations, which can only go to enhance the lives of Tennesseans."

In addition to the Advanced Standing cohort that began its program in June, three groups of between 20 and 25 students concentrated in the vicinities of Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis began studying through the Extended Study Distance Education Program. Information regarding requirements and conditions for the Advanced Standing and Extended Study Programs is available on the college web site at: http://www.csw.utk.edu/students/mssw/distance_ed.html

McClernon-Chaffin is enthusiastic about the prospect for these programs to have great impact on the lives of individuals who may have given up hope that they might be able to attain an MSSW. She is likewise excited about the impact this will have over the long-term on services to people in rural areas of Tennessee where trained social workers are scarce.

Initial student response to the programs has been enthusiastic, both in terms of student interest in joining study cohorts and in the initial response to the study experience. Once students have passed beyond initial anxiety at using unfamiliar computer-based tools, they have found that the

program offers a powerful educational opportunity.

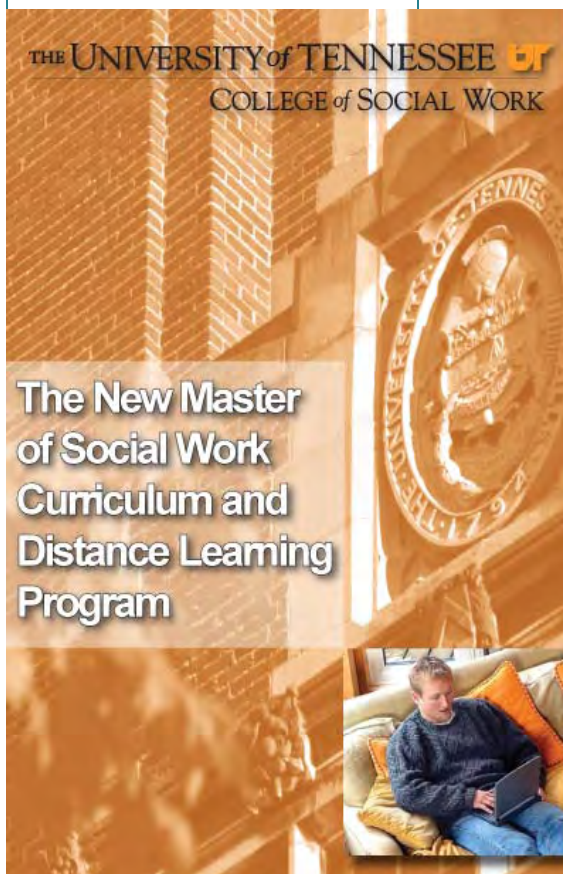
One of the members of the first cohort reflects, "The distance education program gives me learning opportunities—as a 'nontraditional' student with a job and family—that I wouldn't have had otherwise. . . Social work is a career field that many work in with very long, irregular hours and can be all-consuming, as we all know too well, so a social work distance education program is wise in that respect."

Another student stated, "Of any degrees offered at a university, it makes sense that social work would be available in a distance education format. Social work is about improving the lives of not only individuals, but society as a whole; what better way to contribute to that goal than by promoting education through a flexible environment. Distance education creates an opportunity that people in all life stages and circumstances can benefit from. Individuals who would otherwise not be able to attend college courses due to their job, illness, geographical location, or household responsibilities are given a real chance to fulfill their dreams."

All elements and course content in the distance education curriculum are identical to the on-campus curriculum. The same professors teach the courses, the same competencies are met, the same tests and assessments are given, and the same field placements are required. Karen Sowers, dean of the College of Social Work, comments that, "The students who obtain their MSSW through this distance education program will join the ranks of the UT CSW alumni as some of the best-trained practitioners currently working in the social work profession."

Visit <http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus/> to view a demonstration of the online course experience.

—Betsy DeGeorge



port of that program, calling it the "People's University" and saying that the program would "extend her hand to the young shoemaker who studies in his garret."

The University of Tennessee College of Social Work, too, has a long history of extending its educational programs to a wide range of students. Its doors first opened in 1942. "At no time in the history of the country," stated the first school

Four Students Have Joined the Doctoral Program *by Kathy Williams*

The College of Social Work welcomed four new students to the doctoral program in 2007. The students are Katherine Hampton, Young Sook Kim, Mark Oliver, Merriellyn Rennard, and Marico Rivers.

Katherine Hampton, originally from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, holds a BA in Psychol-

ogy and an MSW, both received from the University of South Carolina. The focus of her dissertation is on whether or not school-based

mentoring, as opposed to community-based mentoring, has any impact on outcomes outside of the classroom or academic setting. Hampton plans to graduate from the doctoral program in May of 2010.

Young Sook Kim, originally from Seoul, South Korea, holds a BA in Child Welfare and Studies from Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, Korea, and an MSW from Columbia University in New York. Her research interest is

Organizational Social Context. The focus of her dissertation will be on the elderly with mental health disorders and how organizational climate impacts elderly

with depression in assisted living. She plans to graduate from the doctoral program in 2010.

Mark Oliver, originally from St. Albans, West Virginia, holds a BS in Psychology from Virginia Tech and an MSW from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is considering focusing his dissertation on the effects of combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder on the children of the sufferers. Oliver plans to graduate from the doctoral program in May of 2010.

Merriellyn Rennard, originally from Chattanooga, holds a BSW from UT Chattanooga and an MSW from UT Knoxville. For her dissertation, she is focusing on violence prevention and is taking a holistic approach to examining violence and ultimately preventing it. Rennard is working with the Veterinary Social Work program and will be examining the connection between human and animal violence and complexities of the interpersonal violence, specifically family violence, including intimate partner violence, child abuse, and animal abuse. Rennard plans to graduate from the doctoral program in May of 2010.

The college is pleased to have such outstanding students in the PhD program. We welcome them and wish them good luck in their studies.

—Kathy Williams is a Training Coordinator for SWORPS



First Veterinary Social Work Summit Proclaimed a Success

The College of Social Work's Veterinary Social Work program, housed in the College of Veterinary Medicine, held its first annual Veterinary Social Work Summit in April. The Summit was the first conference in professional social work that was dedicated to human animal relations.



The event brought together representatives of veterinary social work programs from across the globe to discuss topics such as the link between human and animal violence, diversity and animal companionship, animal-assisted interventions, pet loss, compassion fatigue, spirituality, social work and the human animal bond, and mediation in animal-related environments. Additionally, there was an international panel discussion about cross-cultural experiences of animals.

Throughout the conference there were activities for getting to know each other, team building, exercises that highlighted diverse opinions about various topics including animals, as well as exercises that promote being in the present moment—an important step in handling stress.

Dr. Elizabeth Strand, director of the Veterinary Social Work Program at UT, reported that

- 42 participants attended
- 15 states were represented
- 5 countries were represented
- 10 veterinary colleges were represented
- 6 colleges or schools of social work were represented
- 13 lay social work practitioners attended
- 2 veterinary hospitals were represented

Participants expressed that they had a very positive experience at the Summit. One wrote in a follow-up letter, "The Summit was immaculately organized, truly fantastic, a wonderful achievement.....I hope you are pleased by how well it went and how satisfied everyone was. All of the people there were magnificent in making the event work."

And another participant noted in a follow-up letter, "I wanted to let you know that the first Veterinary Social Work Summit was the finest coming together of professionals I have ever attended."

Strand states, "This was a seminal experience in social work. I am so happy that we were able to facilitate these professionals to communicate and share for the purpose of holding this new area of veterinary social work practice to social work's ethical standards and best practices. It was also loads of fun!"

The next Veterinary Social Work Summit will be held at The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine on May 13–16, 2009.

—Kirche Rogers



1. Dr. Bill Bradshaw meets with the Dean and Ph.D. students.



2. Sandra Gonzalez (l) and Gayle Lodato enjoy presentations at the International Social Work Conference in Boston.



3. (l. to r.) Wendy Pitts Reeves (MSSW '88), recipient of the NASW Tennessee Chapter's Public Official of the Year Award, and Dean Sowers at the 2008 Social Work Legislative Conference.



4. Marilyn Smith, second from left (MSSW '71), was the 2008 Lucille Evans Dean award recipient. She celebrated the honor with family and friends who attended the event.



5. Dean Sowers and Dr. Hal Ramer (MSSW '52), Board of Visitors member, at the Lucille Evans Dean award reception.



6. (l. to r.) Dean Sowers with Lou Beasley (past UTCSSW Associate Dean) and Dr. Sherry Cummings at the Lucille Evans Dean award reception.



7. Dr. Michael Blackwell, recently retired dean of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, spoke about the development of veterinary social work practice at the First Annual Veterinary Social Work Summit in April, 2008.



8. Social workers from five countries listened as presenters discussed various aspects of the human-animal bond as well as other topics such as pet loss, compassion fatigue, and stress management. See the story on page 8 for more details, and visit <http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus/> for a photo slideshow of the event.



9. Erin Allen, CSW graduate ('06) and former VSW intern, plays an animal noise game during a session geared toward getting to know other participants in a fun way. She has accepted a veterinary social work position at Colorado State University's prestigious Argus Institute.

Anna Cameron Receives BSSW Student of the Year Award

The College of Social Work presented Anna Cameron with the BSSW Student of the Year Award at the Social Work Legislative Conference in Nashville on March 26, 2008. Dr. Matthew Theriot, an assistant professor and the college's BSSW Program Director, nominated Anna for the award. She was chosen based on her excellent grades, active participation in the BSSW program's student-run Social Work Organization, for doing well in her field placements, and for her commitments to the profession of social work and education.

Anna's level of commitment became apparent when halfway through the fall semester of her senior year her mother was diagnosed with terminal malignant melanoma and was given one to three months to live. As her full-time primary caregiver, Anna had to take a leave of absence from school, field placements, and work. She had to take incompletes and dropped one class. Regrettably, her mother passed away in December. Anna returned to school, field, and work in January. She made A's in all her incompletes and remaining courses. With tremendous support from everyone at the college, she was able to walk across the stage this past May with her friends and classmates.

Dr. Theriot stated, "It was a pleasure to nominate Anna for the award. She is an amazing student and will be a fantastic social worker. Anna deserved the nomination because she has overcome so much and maintained a stellar academic record. During her junior and senior years, she experienced the death of her mother and was a

primary caretaker for her younger siblings. Those are huge challenges for anyone but Anna persevered, earned high grades in all of her classes, performed exceptionally well in her senior field placement, and graduated near the top of her class.

Her perseverance and ability to be successful in light of these challenges made Anna a clearly deserving nominee."

In response to receiving the BSSW Student of the Year Award, Anna stated, "Winning this award

truly meant a lot to me. I worked really hard all throughout college and overcame some adversity in my personal life. My father passed away the summer before I began my freshman year and my two younger brothers and I were financially independent and lived together all throughout my college years. It was the perfect culmination to the journey that was my college education.

"I was honored to receive such recognition and to be nominated in the first place by people that I really respected and looked up to. After my mom passed away I had this renewed passion for social work and was so eager to get back to school and finish my degree, perhaps because of what I learned a social worker could be to a person or family in a situation similar to my own family's. Winning this award only added to my feelings of pride and passion for the profession of social work."

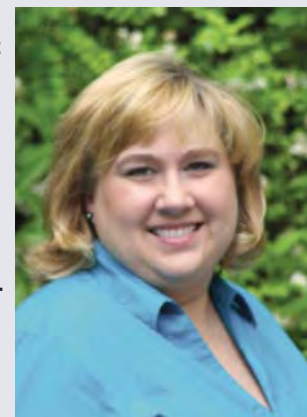
Since graduating, Anna has moved to Orlando, Florida, and is looking forward to a career in social work. She plans to attend graduate school and eventually become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

—Kathy Williams



The CSW Welcomes New Faculty and Distance Education Coordinator

Kimberly McClure Cassie joined the Nashville campus this fall as a lecturer. Before joining the staff, Cassie was a doctoral student at the college, where in 2007 she received a \$50,000 Hartford Dissertation Research Grant from the John A. Hartford Foundation. The grant was administered by The Gerontological Society of America, the oldest and largest multidisciplinary scientific organization devoted to the advancement of gerontological research. In 2005, she was also the recipient of the Hartford Doctoral Fellows Pre-Dissertation Award. Cassie has focused her research on the organizational culture and climate of nursing homes. Specifically, she has studied employee work attitudes, turnover, and resident outcomes. Cassie stated, "I am looking forward to giving back to the university that has given me so much."



Kate McClernon-Chaffin joined the Nashville campus in January 2008 as the new Distance Education (DE) Coordinator. She is responsible for program development, advertising, recruitment, field coordination for DE students (this includes developing field placements and conducting trainings for students and field instructors), coordination of admissions, and teaching. Prior to joining the college, McClernon-Chaffin was the clinical supervisor for the Davidson County Mental Health Court. McClernon-Chaffin stated, "Not a day goes by that I don't reflect on the fact that I am truly living my dream. I have always wanted to work with students in an academic capacity, and the fact that I am promoting social work to rural communities is very exciting and empowering. I am thrilled to be part of a team that supports new cutting-edge approaches in educating social workers."



Sam Choi has joined the Nashville campus as an assistant professor and will be advising students and teaching courses on social welfare policy, evidence-based practice, and evaluative research. Choi received her MSW from Ohio State University and her PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to joining the college, Choi was a postdoctoral scholar at the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. She has worked as project director at Asian American Community Services in Columbus, Ohio, ran two federally-funded family violence projects, and has been involved with the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Waiver Demonstration project. Choi received the Doctoral Fellows Award in 2006 and Honorable Mention of Outstanding Dissertation Award in 2008 from the Society of Social Work Research. She stated, "I am very excited to be joining the college and becoming a part of its ongoing success."



—Kathy Williams

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